

and two others would "lift the caps" on MSAs for all workers and those on Medicare, virtually allowing everyone the freedom to choose a medical savings account.

MSAs would empower federal employees to take control of their own health care decisions. With an MSA, workers can choose which physician or specialist they want to see and when to see them. They decide how they want to spend their health care dollars, and what they don't spend they can roll over to the next year.

Medical savings accounts would reduce health care inflation for the federal government. Results from the private sector show that companies using MSAs report lower utilization of health care services and reduced high-deductible premiums. This contributes to lower overall health care costs for the United States.

MSAs encourage preventive care and "incentivize" people to live healthier, so that they do not need expensive medical services in the future. Unlike some insurance plans that have deductibles or copays to meet, the employee's MSA account has money in it to use immediately if they desire routine or preventive care.

Because they can roll funds leftover at year-end, an MSA account would offer federal employees the ability to build a fund for future health care needs such as long-term care insurance or nursing home services. The savings accrued in these accounts will also help the federal government by reducing dependence on federal health care programs for assistance.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join in on the introduction of this legislation and I urge all members to support the expansion of health care choices for federal employees by cosponsoring Burton/Archer/Thomas/Mica/Salmon.

UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE QUESTIONS U.S. CUBA POLICY

HON. LEE H. HAMILTON

OF INDIANA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 1998

Mr. HAMILTON. Mr. Speaker, I commend to my colleagues' attention the recent statement by Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick, Chairman of the United States Catholic Conference (USCC) Committee on International Policy. The USCC met on the heels of the Pope's historic visit to Cuba, and concluded that "it is incumbent on us, therefore, to take a fresh look at the issues that continue to divide [the United States and Cuba], and to see if it is not time for fresh initiatives to promote goals of reconciliation among us."

We would do well to consider fresh initiatives in U.S. policy toward Cuba.

STATEMENT ON CUBA IN THE LIGHT OF THE PAPAL VISIT BY ARCHBISHOP THEODORE E. MCCARRICK CHAIRMAN, USCC COMMITTEE ON INTERNATIONAL POLICY

JANUARY 30, 1998

Together with other members of the USCC Committee on International Policy and staff of the Conference, I have just returned from a most moving and, I truly believe, historic event, the visit by our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II to the Church and people of

Cuba. It was a visit that not only provided new hope and energy for the Church in Cuba, enabling the faithful to express their religious beliefs in a climate of ever greater freedom, but may also have marked a positive advance in the long sought for goal of reconciliation among the Cuban people, both within Cuba and with the Cubans in the diaspora. It is our hope that the visit will also mark a new phase in the relations between our two countries, so deeply in need of reconciliation.

As bishops of the Church in the United States, we feel strongly called to express our convictions about possible implications the visit may have for the conduct of our country's policy toward Cuba. No other country in the world looms as large in the minds of the Cuban people and their government as does the United States. No other country has had, and continues to have, such a turbulent and mutually hostile relationship with Cuba as does the United States. And no other country outside of Cuba itself has within it such a large concentration of Cuba's sons and daughters. It is incumbent on us, therefore, to take a fresh look at the issues that continue to divide us, and see if it is not time for fresh initiatives to promote the goals of reconciliation among us.

As a Conference, our overarching concern has been and continues to be the freedom of the Church in Cuba to exercise its threefold ministry of free and open worship, of prophetic preaching, and of Christian service to the needy. Within this essential framework of religious liberty and respect for fundamental human rights which we call upon the Cuban government to assure, we turn to the policies of our own government. The central U.S. policy issue is, of course, the decades-old economic sanctions imposed by our government against Cuba. As far back as 1969, the Cuban bishops called for the dismantling of the trade embargo, a move that was publicly supported by the USCC in 1972. It was only in the present decade, however, that circumstances have made such appeals even remotely possible.

The moral principles governing Catholic teaching on economic sanctions in general, and on Cuba specifically, are well known. The Cuban bishops have repeatedly expressed their opposition to "any kind of measure that, in order to punish the Cuban government, serves to aggravate the problems of our people." Observing that embargoes are acts of force, the bishops addressed provisions of the 1992 Cuban Democracy Act, stating that any embargo that prevents essential foods and medicines from getting to people in need is "morally unacceptable, generally in violation of the principles of international law, and always contrary to the value of the Gospel."

After the passage of the so-called Helms-Burton Act in 1996, the Cuban bishops expressed their concern that the law runs the risk of "making even more difficult the likelihood of finding peaceful means to lead to the reconciliation of all Cubans." Cardinal Jaime Ortega of Havana added that "Any economic measure that aims to isolate a country and thus eliminates the possibility of development, thus threatening the survival of people, is unacceptable."

And in his departure remarks at José Martí Airport on January 25th, Pope John Paul stressed that, in our day, "No nation can live in isolation. The Cuban people therefore cannot be denied the contacts with other peoples necessary for economic, social and cultural development, especially when the imposed isolation strikes the population indiscriminately, making it ever more difficult for the weakest to enjoy the bare essentials of decent living, things such as food, health and education. All can and should

take practical steps to bring about changes in this regard."

The officials of our government repeatedly affirm their readiness to at least modify aspects of the embargo, to take some practical steps, in response to clear signs of a greater opening within the society and increased respect for basic human rights, including religious freedom. While we make no predictions on how lasting some of the expressions of openness shown by the Cuban government prior to and during the papal visit may prove to be, it is an undeniable fact that important changes did occur over this past year; allowing for the door-to-door missions conducted by the dioceses to talk about the Pope's visit, permission for a number of open-air Masses, including hitherto forbidden religious processions, granting a larger than previously allowed number of visas for foreign priests and religious to minister in Cuba, a limited amount of access to the state media, even re-instating Christmas, at least for this past year, as a national holiday, and other expressions of a more open official attitude toward the rights and freedoms of believers.

As welcome as these changes are, it is obvious that they fall far short of the measure of a just society repeatedly outlined by the Holy Father. But they are steps along a better path and should be acknowledged as such. In our view, therefore, it is clearly time for the United States also to take some practical steps of its own and test whether the hopes enkindled by the papal visit can lead to real improvements in relations between our two countries.

First of all, we call upon the President to rescind the onerous and evidently meaningless ban on direct flights to Cuba, requiring all passenger traffic and humanitarian aid to transit third countries en route to Cuba. This ban was lifted for flights related to the papal visit these past weeks, for which we are indeed grateful. But as humanitarian agencies here, such as Catholic Relief Services and Catholic Medical Mission Board, plan their next shipments of critically needed medicines and other aid to the Cuban Church's relief and development agency, Caritas Cuba, they are still faced with the excessive added costs that third country transit imposes.

Secondly, only a very small part of the nutritional and health needs of the Cuban people can be met by these periodic infusions of humanitarian aid from private donors from other countries. The Cuban people need these commodities from abroad, including from the United States, without excessive prohibitions and restrictions. The present socio-political system, privileging those with power and ready access to hard currency but leaving great numbers of the poor with inadequate access to food and medicine, will not be changed overnight. The demands of elementary social justice, however, call upon us to do what we can to alleviate the suffering of the Cuban people, especially the poorest and most vulnerable. Ending the restrictions on the sale of food and medicines, as legislation currently in both Houses and of the U.S. Congress calls for, would be, in our view, a noble and needed humanitarian gesture and an expression of wise statesmanship on the part of our elected leaders.

It is our fervent hope and prayer that the encouraging, inspiring and, we hope, transforming words spoken by the Holy Father in Cuba will continue to strengthen and give hope to the Cuban people, especially our brothers and sisters in the faith. And we pray that his powerful and eloquent calls for a more open, participative and just society, for a liberation "that reaches its fullness in the exercise of freedom of conscience, the basis and foundation of all other human

rights," will be ever more heeded by the civil authorities. We urge and look forward to further hopeful signs of positive developments within Cuban society that could lead toward the needed rapprochement between our two countries and reconciliation among all our peoples.

The Holy Father summarized his goal for the visit as offering the "opportunity to strengthen not only the courageous Catholics of that country but also all their fellow citizens in their efforts to achieve a homeland ever more just and united, where all individuals can find their rightful place and see their legitimate aspirations realized." We stand with the Cuban people in their just hopes for full civic, political and religious freedom.

CELEBRATING A CHICAGO LEGEND

HON. HENRY J. HYDE

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 1998

Mr. HYDE. Mr. Speaker, one of the few genuine legends of Chicago journalism, Irv Kupcinet, has just completed 55 years of writing one of the most popular columns in the midwest. "Kup" has countless friends in the worlds of entertainment, politics and sports. His entire career has been spent with the Chicago Sun-Times and predecessor newspapers. And on January 18th, the Sun-Times published a warm editorial which I am pleased to share with my colleagues:

KUP A TREASURE

For 55 years, Kup's Column has been a staple of Chicago journalism. And its author, Irv Kupcinet, has been a dean of his profession.

It is not just that he has done what he does for so many years. It is that he has done it with a grace, quality and compassion so often missing from contemporary American culture.

Kup has been a gentleman away from his keyboard as well. Over the years, he has spent his time and money supporting the Weizmann Institute of Science, the Chicago Academy for the Arts, Little City Foundation and the Variety Club, and working on telethons raising money for Easter Seals, muscular dystrophy and cerebral palsy. Last, but certainly not least, he spent an amazing 50 years hosting the Purple Heart Cruise to thank veterans for their service to the country.

And to think this whole, wonderful career happened only because an injury ended his first career as a professional football player.

Football's loss was Our Town's gain. Chicago, and the Sun-Times, are lucky to have you, Kup.

REGARDING COL. WILLIAM VOGEL

HON. SONNY CALLAHAN

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 1998

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a moment to extend my utmost appreciation to Col. William Vogel, district engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Mobile District. Colonel Vogel deserves special recognition for the hard work and dedication to his employees demonstrated during the recent reduction in

force executed at the Army Corps of Engineers' Mobile District.

Faced with unfortunate, but unavoidable funding constraints, the Corps was forced to notify 192 employees in June 1997 they would be affected by the impending RIF in October of the same year. Obviously, when this notice was made public by the Corps there was tremendous and justified concern and uneasiness felt on the part of those employees whose names appeared among the 192.

Colonel Vogel led the mission to accomplish the necessary reductions and made every effort to minimize the apprehension and potentially devastating implications to his dedicated and loyal work force. He worked tirelessly to accomplish this goal. Realizing the only way a mutually beneficial agreement could be reached was through the cooperation of the Corps' management and the union, Colonel Vogel met often with union officials in an attempt to minimize the impact on those who would be terminated. Among the many efforts designed to accomplish this goal, local union leaders were invited to attend staff meetings and labor-management meetings were increased to every 2 weeks, therefore opening the lines of communication between the two sides.

The immensely successful program which followed was the direct result of Colonel Vogel's efforts. Several options were made available to the employees who faced termination, ranging from early retirement packages to transfers or pay cuts. A center was established to facilitate job placement for those who chose to leave. The final results in December 1997 were, given the potential alternatives, the best possible in this unfortunate situation. Seventy-nine employees left to pursue other employment opportunities and 113 were to be re-assigned. Of the 192 employees affected by the Reduction in Force, none were faced with involuntary separation.

I would like to personally thank Colonel Vogel and his staff for their dedication and commitment to their employees and coworkers. As Congress continues in its efforts to reduce the size of the Federal Government, other Federal agencies facing the same downsizing realities would do wise to study the model and accomplishment put forth by Colonel William Vogel and his staff.

I and everyone else affected by the Corps' reduction in force extend our sincere appreciation for a difficult job well done.

TRIBUTE TO NAVY CAPT. MANUEL A. HIPOL

HON. OWEN B. PICKETT

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 5, 1998

Mr. PICKETT. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to Capt. Manuel A. Hipol of the Navy Medical Corps who is retiring after almost 30 years of loyal and dedicated service to our country.

Born in Manila, Philippines, Captain Hipol launched his medical career at Manila Central University, completing its thoracic medicine residency program at the Philippines Veterans Hospital in 1966. Later that year he immigrated to the United States and settled in Seattle, WA, where he completed a 1-year in-

ternship and then accepted a commission as captain in the U.S. Army.

Like many dedicated, hard working career medical officers, Captain Hipol saw duty in numerous locations including Fort Sam Houston, TX; Fort Sheridan, IL; the Rock Island, IL Arsenal dispensary where he became officer-in-charge; and the Camp McCoy Army Dispensary, Sparta, WI, also serving as officer-in-charge.

Captain Hipol resigned from the U.S. Army in 1974 and almost immediately accepted a commission in the U.S. Navy as a lieutenant commander. His first assignment at the Naval Medical Center, Portsmouth, VA, was in the radiology department of Boone Clinic. He transferred to the reserves and served as commanding officer of the Naval Reserve, Naval Station Branch Clinic 106 in Norfolk. In 1980, he was promoted to the rank of captain.

Captain Hipol was recalled to active duty during Desert Storm and rejoined the reserves after his active duty release. Despite these many transfers and assignments, he remained active in numerous professional and community organizations including: the Association of Philippine Physicians in America; the Manila Central University Medical Alumni Association of America, where he served as national president; the Philippine Cultural Center Building Committee, where he served as chairman; and the Council of United Filipino Organizations of Tidewater, where he also served as chairman.

He has been recognized as 1 of the 20 most outstanding Filipino-Americans in the United States and Canada.

Dr. Hipol will continue his medical practice of outpatient diagnostic radiology in partnership with his wife, Rose, who practices general internal medicine. I join his many friends in wishing Captain Hipol and his family fair winds and following seas.

TRIBUTE TO THE HONORABLE RONALD V. DELLUMS

SPEECH OF

HON. ROB PORTMAN

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, February 3, 1998

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to RON DELLUMS, a friend and a man whose departure from Congress will leave a major void on Capitol Hill. RON is known as an articulate spokesman for his constituents and a serious legislator of proven ability. These attributes alone when combined with his many years of public service are worthy of praise and commendation. But RON brought more to the job that singled him out as a congressional and national leader.

He reached out: across the aisle, across racial boundaries, and across ideological lines. He did it with a sincerity that was heartfelt and a pure motive, and it showed. This was his magic and this was the key to his many friendships and the unusual respect he received during his service and upon his retirement. I know Congress as an institution is a better place for his service. I hope we as individual Members have learned from his example.